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that he lacks the art of happy arrangement. Subjects come up in the most unexpected places. For this reason, if for no other, a fuller index would have improved the volume.

JAMES W. CROOK.

Amherst College.

The Contest over the Ratification of the Federal Constitution in Massachusetts. By SAMUEL BANNISTER HARDING, A. M. Pp. 194. Price, \$1.25. Harvard Historical Studies, No. II. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1896.

"In the United States the history of party," says Mr. Bryce, "begins with the Constitutional Convention of 1787, at Philadelphia." Too late by a score of years this date seems to many. But it remains true that in the record of the convention and of the contest over the ratification of its work there is to be found not a little material of the highest interest and importance to any one who would obtain "a right understanding of the subsequent party struggles in national politics, by which the interpretation of the constitution was fixed and the scope and general policy of the new government were determined." It is upon this quest that Mr. Harding has pursued his very successful investigation in Massachusetts.

The two causes directly fostering the development of opposition to the frame of government presented in the constitution are found in the inordinate self-confidence of the people as to their ability to pass upon the most abstruse questions of government and in the pronounced antagonism in matters political between the upper and the lower classes—a dislike of the rich by the poor, a distrust of the town by the country, of the merchants by the farmers.

In his account of the vigorous newspaper discussions which preceded the meeting of the convention, Mr. Harding presents almost exclusively the lines of attack, assuming that the defensive arguments are familiar. The lack of a bill of rights was much criticised and not a little fear was felt lest Congress should use its powers to so control elections as to make the mercantile interests dominant. The atmosphere of the recent Shay's rebellion still breathes in the opposition to the clauses "prohibiting to the states the power to emit bills of credit, or to make tender laws." "Here," wrote one of the most vigorous opponents, "I suppose the principal weight of the opposition will hang." Consolidation was feared, and it was thought that the powers both of the courts and of Congress were too loosely limited. Not a little prescience was shown by "a Republican Federalist" who comments thus upon the elastic clause of the constitution (Art. I, Sec. viii, § 18): "This I call an *omnipotent* clause, for I

must believe the man who says that he can see in its *aphelion* a court which requires a century for its revolution, as soon as him that says he can see the extent to which an artful and arbitrary legislature can by this clause *stretch* their powers."

The convention was large and representative and not a few of Shay's followers, it is said, found a place in its membership. Most of the delegates came without formal instructions. In the convention the advocates of the constitution were at first a minority, but enjoyed better leadership than their opponents. With caution and forbearance they gave patient hearing and discussion to all objections. The opposition followed in the main the lines foreshadowed in the ante-convention controversy. Most difficult to overcome was the apprehension, vague but widespread, that somehow the liberties of the people were in danger.

The old revolutionary leaders do not appear in a very creditable light in this contest. In various letters and pamphlets Gerry had opposed the Federal plan. Though not a member of the convention, he sat with the members by special invitation until his forwardness caused dissensions, which led to his absenting himself thereafter. In the early weeks Samuel Adams maintained a neutral position, though at heart hostile to the plan. At one important juncture he did good service in checking undue haste, but later he did not hesitate to imperil the whole scheme by introducing certain amendments through which he apparently hoped to court popularity. The "conciliatory proposition," in accordance with which Massachusetts ratified the constitution while proposing amendments, was introduced by John Hancock. Investigation fails to determine who deserves the credit of its authorship, but leaves little doubt that Hancock's service in introducing it was rendered only after he had been convinced that it would be made "worth his while."

The evidence of a bargain by which Hancock was to receive the support of Bowdoin's friends in the next gubernatorial campaign with a likelihood of nomination for the vice-presidency, rests not only upon specific charges in the press, but also upon several letters of Rufus King.

As a result of the introduction of this "conciliatory proposition," the convention voted in favor of ratification by the narrow vote of 187 to 168, the coast counties being strongly in favor of it, while the chief opposition came from the inland and rural communities. The charge that ratification was brought about by improper influence, is clearly proved to rest upon an entirely untrustworthy foundation. Massachusetts' decision marks the turning point in the general contest. Not only was the victory won in an influential state, but a satisfactory

compromise course was here pointed out, which the hesitant states were not slow in adopting.

It is in the second chapter of the monograph, dealing with the ante-convention discussion, that the materials proved least tractable. Mr. Harding has chosen to present in successive layers abstracts of letters from nine or ten different writers to the press and to personal correspondents. These writers are, with few exceptions, entirely unknown to history, and it may well be questioned whether this arrangement does not obtrude them too much upon the reader's attention, while the real perspective in the opposition is obscured by duplication and by the often illogical sequence of arguments within the letters themselves. The method of the historian, rather than of the exchange editor, would seem to be the more desirable, inasmuch as the two collections of letters which are most liberally abstracted, are themselves printed in full in appendices which take up one-third of the text in this volume. If these are considered so inaccessible as to entitle them to such prominence, it would seem worth while to bestow a little careful editing upon them in the way of notes. It is unfortunate, too, that specific cross references are not given between them and the study itself, and that they are not made more serviceable to the reader by extending the scope of the index to cover these also. In a few instances there is a heaping up of useless facts, as in the giving of dates of quite a number of newspapers in which the text of the constitution was reprinted. The very frequent introduction of ["sic"] into quotations from illiterate writers, becomes decidedly wearisome.

In arrangement, typography and binding this is an excellent piece of book-making. The study is supplemented by a good bibliographical note on the sources, and a list of the authorities cited.

GEORGE H. HAYNES.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

The Nicaragua Canal and the Monroe Doctrine. A Political History of Isthmus Transit, with Special Reference to the Nicaragua Canal Project and the Attitude of the United States Government thereto. By LINDLEY MILLER KEASBEY, Ph.D., R. P. D. Pp. xvii, 622. Price, \$3.50. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1896.

No one will read Professor Keasbey's book on "The Nicaragua Canal and the Monroe Doctrine" without being impressed by its thoroughness. The purpose of the author has been not merely to enumerate the principal events in the history of the canal enterprise, but also to put these events in their proper setting as steps in the history of the world's commerce since the discovery of America. The